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To the Chairman and Members of the
Horncastle Urban District Council.

Gentlemen,

I have much pleasure in
submitting my first report for your consideration.

Having acted as your Medical Officer of Health since July,
1896, it will only be a six months report, and perhaps
therefore, hardly complete in some details.

The population of Horncastle, exclusive of the Workhouse,
has been taken at 4,062, and the following numbers of
births and deaths are for the half-year, whilst the birth-
rate and death-rate are calculated for the whole year.

There were 35 births, of which 17 were males and 18 were
females, making the birth-rate 17.2 per 1000 per annum.

There were 35 deaths at the following ages:-

Under 1 year	1 death
1 and under 5 years	3 "
5 " 15 "	3 "
15 " 25 "	1 "
25 " 65 "	7 "
65 " 75 "	5 "
75 and over	<u>15</u> "
Total	35 deaths

This makes the death-rate 17.2 per 1000 per annum.
There were 2 births and 14 deaths in the Workhouse
during the same period.

Only 5 cases have been notified under the Infectious
Diseases Act, of which two were Erysipelas and
three were Diphtheria. Two of the cases of diphtheria
were removed to the Infectious Diseases Hospital, owing
to want of proper accommodation at home, and
disinfection was carried out wherever it was
considered necessary.

No deaths occurred from any of these diseases, and the town is quite free from any infectious (notifiable) disease at the present time.

I have systematically visited, with the Sanitary Inspector, all the slaughter-houses, piggeries, bakeries, dairies, lodging-houses, back-yards, and houses suspected of nuisances all over the town.

In the great majority of cases, where we have found anything in an unsanitary condition, the tenants or proprietors of the property have put it right on our recommendation, without the necessity of an order from the council, and we have only reported those cases where our notice was unheeded or improperly carried out.

A number of dirty houses, unfit for habitation, have been inspected, and as a rule they have been cleaned by giving a verbal notice, whilst a few have been reported to the council.

This leads me to request the members of the Council to give the occupiers of dirty houses, not more than seven days' notice to put their dwellings into a clean and habitable condition, except in exceptional cases.

The slaughter-houses in many cases are unsatisfactory, both in condition and position. In all of them the brick floors are chipped and broken, allowing the washings, containing blood and other obnoxious matter, to gravitate there, and cannot be thoroughly cleaned out. Also the position of many of the slaughter-houses in back premises and near to dwelling-houses may constitute a nuisance, and should be condemned wherever possible.

A public abattoir is very necessary for the town, where, in addition to its sanitary site and condition, all the meat and internal organs could be examined

when killed, and where disease might be discovered in the lungs, liver, etc, sufficient to condemn the meat, but which cannot be discovered in the meat itself.

But until we have such a public abattoir, the present condition of the existing slaughter-houses requires attention. The floors should be cemented right over, and no holes allowed where matters could lie and putrefy, and more especially is this necessary where the slaughter-houses are situated in back-yards and near to dwelling-houses.

Again, the pining-folds, which are in direct communication with the slaughter-houses, often without even a door intervening, should have separate entrances and be distinct from the slaughter-houses.

One Piggery, off South-street, has been done away with, owing to its proximity to dwelling-houses. A few are being kept in a much better sanitary condition than formerly, after due notice having been given; whilst several more, like the slaughter-houses, want clearing out of back premises, where they are liable to become nuisances, especially in hot weather.

The bakehouses and dairies were found clean and generally satisfactory, and conform to all that is required by law.

The lodging-house in St. Lawrence St. in its present condition is not suitable as such. The inside is in a tumble-down condition, and the sleeping space is not sufficient for the number of beds. It requires remeasuring and considerable alterations.

Only one case of overcrowding came under our notice, in Prospect St; and the agent for the property gave the tenant notice to leave when the matter was reported to him.

The Canal at the South Basin has been further purified, by some drains which emptied therein, containing noxious matters, being connected to the sewerage drains.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your Obedient Servant

(Signed) Robert McLay, M.D.

Medical Officer of Health

Hornucastle

28th January 1897.
